

13, 9, 21

# THE NEGRO WORKER

No. 7

July 15, 1932

Vol. 2



**Labour with a White Skin cannot Emancipate itself,  
where Labour with a Black Skin is Branded! - Marx.**

*Price 5 cents*

*Price 2 pence*



***Editors are invited to reprint articles and resolutions  
which appear in the "Negro Worker".***

---

***Editorial Board:*** George Padmore (U. S. A.), Editor-in-Chief.

Contributing Editors: J. W. Ford, Cyril Briggs, D. B. Amis  
(U. S. A.); O. E. Huiswood (R. I. L. U.); C. Alexander (West Indies); E. Forster Jones, E. F. Small (West Africa); G. Kouyatte (French West Africa); A. Nzula, E. T. Mofutsanyana (South Africa); Mansey (Congo).

Managing Editor: Max Barek (Hamburg).

---

## CONTENTS

1. How The Empire Is Governed. By Padmore.
2. An Open Letter To The I. L. D.
3. Atrocities In The Congo. By Lukuta te.
4. Mr. Vandervelde "Discovers" The Congo.
5. The Struggles of The West Indian Masses. By C. Alexander.
6. Voices From The Colonies.
7. Lynch Justice In America.
8. Letter of a Son To His Mother.
9. A Challenge To The War Mongers.
10. How The Workers Live In Cameroon. By J. Bile.
11. Revolutionary Poems.

---

**ORGAN OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION COMMITTEE  
OF NEGRO WORKERS, 8 ROTHESOODSTR., HAMBURG, GERMANY**

---

**Notice to our Readers.**

All cheques, money orders and registered letters must be made payable to:  
**The International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers:**  
8, Rothesoodstrasse, Hamburg.



# THE NEGRO WORKER

No. 7

July 1932

Vol. 2

## How The Empire Is Governed

By Geo Padmore.

**B**ritish Imperialism is no infant. It is full grown. So full grown that it is becoming senile and thanks to the blows which it is receiving from its more verile rivals, especially the U.S. on the one hand, and the revolts of the toiling masses under its yoke on the other, is beginning to totter. Even the blind can see that its fall is inevitable. However, while it lasts, let us briefly review how it is governed.

\* \* \*

**F**or centuries the ruling class of Britain through wars with rival imperialist powers, military expeditions, frauds, corruption and trickery, especially of British merchant-capitalists and missionaries in Africa and India, has been planting the Union Jack in other peoples' territories. It is in this way the so-called mighty British Empire has been carved out.

During these centuries of colonial domination and exploitation, the imperialists of Britain can truly be said to have learnt the art of "governing". Their policy in a dual one. On the one hand, they maintain their domination over the colonial masses through deceit, hypocrisy and corruption. And when these methods fail, brute force, and terrorism, backed up by machine guns and bombing planes are brought into action in order to maintain the authority of these white overlords.

\* \* \*

**N**ow let us see how the first method of British domination is being concretely applied in various parts of the Empire.

In **India**, the imperialists have been able to maintain a stronghold over three hundred millions people by exploiting religious differences among the toiling masses, through organized pogroms. When the true history of India comes to be written, the facts will reveal that the agents of the British Rajah have been as skillful provocateurs as those of Nicolas II. Let no one be so naive as to think that the British are in India for India's good. That is what the missionaries and other middle-class people who masquerade as "friends of India" would have the world believe. And it is just because of this kind of humbug that these people must be branded as some of the greatest enemies of the Indian masses. In this respect the diehard Tory imperialists are by far more honest than these ecclesiastical and petty-bourgeois charlatans. Some years ago, the late Sir Joynson-Hicks, Secretary of State for Home Affairs publicly declared:

"We did not conquer India for the benefit of the Indians. I know in missionary meetings it is said that we conquered India to raise the level of the Indians. That is cant!



"We conquered India as an outlet for the goods of Great Britain. We conquered India by the sword, and by the sword we shall hold it." (Shame.)

"Call it shame if you like. I am stating facts. I am interested in missionary work of that kind, but I am not such a hypocrite as to say that we hold India for the benefit of the Indians. We hold it as the finest outlet for British goods in general, and for Lancashire cotton goods in particular."

And just because of this, as long as India remains under British domination, so long will we witness Hindus flying at Mohammedans threats, and vice versa. For back of every communal riot in this land of misery, and hunger, stands the agents-provocateur of British Imperialism. Believe it or not!

A Tass message from Rome published in the "**Pravda**" of June 26, states:—

"Italian divers who are employed in the Bay of Biscay on the salvage of cargo from the Egypt, which was sunk some years ago on a voyage from England to India, state that the steamer was loaded with arms and munitions, although the official bills of lading and customs documents show a different cargo.

The Italian Press calls attention to the fact that the English customs issued false documents, and points out that, with the sanction of the English authorities, the steamer was carrying arms for the Indian Moslems for the purpose of provoking religious conflicts.

Referring to the recent bloody events—in Bombay, "**Stampa**" writes:—

"This episode throws some light on the eastern policy of England, which sends millions of bullets and arms to the Indian Moslems, although no trace of such a transaction is to be found in the ship's documents. It is possible that some individuals who thought that their secret was buried at the bottom of the sea will be very much disconcerted by this compromising discovery."

\* \* \*

**W**hat applies to India also occurs in **Ireland**. Wherever the British imperialists have conquered a people of homogenous racial stock, they have utilized religion as the wedge to carry through their policy of "divide and rule". In India it is Hinduism against Mohammedanism. In Ireland it is Protestantism against Catholicism. For nobody realizes more so than the hypocritical puritanic British capitalists the truism, that "religion is the opium of the people". And they are out to exploit it to the fullest.

Ireland, one of the oldest nations in the world has not only been robbed and plundered for centuries; its peasantry starved and driven off the land; millions forced to migrate to America;—but the British bond holders and absentee landlords have torn the country in two. "Protestant" Ulster versus the "catholic" South! Just recently, during a religious congress in Dublin, we witnesses the extent to which religious fanaticism has driven bleeding Ireland. Irish protestant workers and peasants, misled by British imperialist agents attacked groups of Irish catholic workers and peasants, simply because religion has been used to poison them against their fellow-exploited countrymen. Thanks to these artificial barriers fostered and maintained by an alien conqueror, these arrogant British slave holders, through their agent, J. H. Thomas, have the impudence to threaten the toiling masses of the Irish Free State to pay them 3 million Pounds annual tribute, under the farcical display of indignation that the Irish people are violating their "sacred" obligations. Such hypocritical phrase mongering by this ex-socialist and traitor of the British workers is enough to turn the stomachs of all decent minded and freedom loving peoples.

\* \* \*



**W**hat applies to India,—and Ireland, equally applies to **Africa**. It is quite true that the methods used by the British exploiters and oppressors in Africa are not so much based upon religion, but the policy of "divide and rule" is the same.

Let us see: In those parts of Africa where the British invaders found an economic and social system with a sufficiently developed political organization, through which they could operate,—as in Northern Nigeria, they introduced the "unique" system of "Indirect Rule". Lord Lugard was the father of this ingenious form of colonial plunder. The lands were confiscated from the natives and the chiefs were stripped of all of their traditional authority, and turned into tax-collectors and forced labour agents, behind whom, the European officials have been able, not only to extort tribute from the workers and the peasants, but to make slaves out of them.

In other colonies, especially in East Africa (Kenya) the same policy has been applied. The natives have been driven away from their best lands, which have been turned over to white landlords, for the development of plantations with forced labour.

At the present moment, the British imperialists are attempting to introduce the same methods into the Gold Coast. Here we witness some of the most brazen methods utilized by the imperialists to carry out their aims.

Thanks to the world economic crisis, the Gold Coast, like other African colonies, is faced with a tremendous financial deficit. So in order to find the money to maintain the state apparatus with its fabulous salaries for the European officialdom, the late Governor, Sir Ransford Slater attempted to introduce direct taxation in the form of **Income Tax**. This however, met with spontaneous mass opposition. The workers and peasants in Cape Coast staged monster demonstrations and protested against the enactments of the Bill.

Faced with a threatened revolt of the great mass of the population, the government made a temporary retreat. Governor Slater paid a hasty visit to Nigeria and after a conference with Sir Donald Cameron, the governor of that colony, returned to the Gold Coast well armed with the weapon of indirect policy which Lugard has saddled upon Nigeria.

Slater held a conference with the native chiefs, and by promising them certain privileges succeeded in driving a wedge among the Gold Coast people. The new scheme is to enact the original **Income Tax Bill** under the title of **Native Revenue Bill**. Through this vicious piece of legislation, the British imperialists tell the chiefs that they would be given the right to impose taxation upon the people and as reward for this, they would get a certain percentage for their local administration.

Although there is still much opposition against this new manoeuvre, the government has succeeded to some extent in splitting up the united front which formerly existed amongst the chiefs. Those of the Eastern provinces, enamoured by the opportunity of becoming His Majesty's tax collectors are in favour of enforcing the new Bill when it becomes law with the aid of armed police and the West African Frontier Force.

The danger of increased taxation still menaces the Gold Coast people. The toiling masses must realize that the imperialists do not give a tinker's damn about individual African "leaders", no matter how big or powerful they may consider themselves. What they are afraid of, however, is the organized mass action of the workers and peasants. For at heart, every tyrant is a coward.

Furthermore, the British rulers in Africa also try to maintain their domination over the masses through other forms of corruption. For example: Where the prestige of the chiefs can no longer be utilized to rob the toiling population, the



governments try to alienate certain sections of the intellectuals from the broad masses and thereby undermine the nationalist movement and put a brake upon the ever increasing anti-imperialist struggle for freedom and self-determination.

This is done in the following way: The government buy over these intellectuals by promising them jobs or a career in the colonial service. Already a number of them, who were at one time considered opponents of British imperialism, and champions of the people, have been won over by the skilful manoeuvring of the white officials and missionaries,—agents of the imperialists.

These native traitors have either been given decorative seats on Legislative Councils, petty positions, such as police magistrates, and other minor state offices, or otherwise decorated with some medal or title O. B. E., a Knighthood, etc., which George Vth is so fond of dishing out on his birthday.

These British imperialists certainly know the art of effectively applying in their colonial policy semi-feudal titles and decorations in corrupting the upper-class Negroes.

\* \* \*

**I**n the West Indies this method of corruption is even more wide spread than in Africa. The Negro bourgeoisie and upper middle class is the most bribable strata of the population. The former without any substantial independent economic base and the latter saturated with all the ideology of exploiters themselves, from their very birth aspire to serve His Majesty in some form or the other. Throughout the West Indies and British Guiana the greatest ambition of the average middle-class Negro is to play the role of the King's monkeys by dressing up in ancient frock coats, silk hats and gold brade à la Marcus Garvey and strutting about as "honorable" members of Legislative or municipal Councils. When they fall short of this, they make a compromise with some provincial position in the state apparatus. But here again, the British overlords have been able to resort to an artificial method of splitting up the population and thereby prevent the crystallization of any dangerous anti-imperialist united front. This is done through the **Colour Caste System**. This is wide spread in the West Indies, especially in Jamaica, Barbados and the Windward Islands. Since the majority of the population of these islands are Negroes, the imperialists see to it that the mulattoes are put against the blacks, and vice versa. This is skilfully carried out in the following way. The dominant economic and political power is vested in the hands of Europeans, who in turn appoint the mulattoes to positions immediately below them; and in this way, use the mulattoes as overseers to keep the black masses in subjection. So whenever the black workers and peasants revolt against oppressive taxation or other forms of imperialist robbery, they invariably find that the ones who are directly applying the policy which they are in rebellion against, are native mulattoes who shelter the real bloodsuckers, the white imperialists. What applies to the State policy, is even more openly manifested in the commercial life of the islands. It is a well known fact that the majority of banks, shipping companies, stores, and commercial houses of the British capitalists make it a policy only to employ mulatto men and women. Who, because of their more privileged economic position, in turn despise the darker skinned Negroes and help their masters to ruthlessly exploit them.

\* \* \*

**H**and in hand with their policy of "divide and rule", the British imperialists foster many illusions among the Negro colonial masses, which serves as a tremendous bulwark behind which millions and millions are deceived as to the true mission of these whites in the colonies. In order to put these humbugs over, the churches, the



missionary schools the boy scouts and girl guides-movements, flag waving ceremonies, especially Empire Day, are all brought into full play in the service of British imperialism. For example, one of the most widespread illusions to be met with in Africa and the West Indies (and we presume the same thing applies to India) is, that there is no colour prejudice in England. That the Union Jack is the symbol of "justice" and "fairplay" for all, whether white or black, rich or poor, high or low. This kind of bunk is repeated so often, that although the Negroes are treated hardly any better than chattel slaves, or a pariah race, the vast majority of so-called educated Negroes still believe in this nonsense.

As we have already stated, the British bourgeoisie is shrewd and cunning. They are not of yesterday! They are one of the oldest ruling classes in the world, with centuries of colonial experience. Furthermore, they are past masters in the art of hypocrisy, and when compared with their American rivals, they can truly be said to be in a class by themselves. For example: A yankee imperialist will openly treat coloured people in America, as well as the colonies (Haiti, Hiawaian islands, Philippines) as an "inferior" race to be exploited. The typical American colonial official does not disdain to wound the sensibilities of the Negroes people under the "Stars and Stripes" by referring to them as "niggers". The British imperialists and their colonial lackeys do not differ with the Yankees in their mental attitude toward the darker colonial peoples, but being more cunning and hypocritical, they try to create the impression that Negroes and Indians are the equals of the other peoples of the Empire. While an American imperialist will openly refuse to associate with the Negroes of Haiti, or elsewhere, the English exploiter would shake hands and even dine with some bourgeois Negro in Jamaica, or one of the other colonies who could be used as a tool to further the interest of British imperialism. But you may rest assured that as soon as the Negro's back is turned, the European "gentleman" runs to the first wash basin to clean his hands from the contamination of a "nigger". This, in brief, characterizes the difference in outward attitude between these two types of imperialists—British and American. But because the Negro bourgeoisie and middle class, belly-crawling, kow-towing Negroes in Africa and the West Indies have been so saturated with British imperialist propaganda that they are not able to see through the fraud and deceit of these colonial robbers. And it is just because of this, such types of Negroes can never carry on a real militant struggle for our freedom.

These are only some of the many ways through which the rulers of this "mighty" British Empire are able to maintain their yoke over hundreds of millions of human beings in the colonies.

\* \* \*

**I**t is hardly necessary for us to record the other method which British imperialism utilizes when the so-called peaceful methods fail to achieve the required results. This is too well known. To record the occasions on which the strong armed policy of British imperialism have been applied would fill volumes. It is sufficient to recall the "Black and Tan" regime in Ireland; Amritsar and the present reign of terror in India; the incarceration of 33 labour leaders in Meerut prison; the 40,000 Indians in His Majesty's prisons for the "crime" of expressing their right to live as a free and independent people; the thousands of peasants bombed on the North-West frontier and other parts India; the recent massacre of unarmed Negro women in Nigeria; the mass terrorism in South Africa; the forceful confiscation of lands of thousands of East African toilers, and their enslavement on European plantations and mining companies; the denial of every elementary right of freedom of speech, public assembly, organization and press; the administration of "justice"



through Ordinances that can only be equalled during the vilest regime of reaction under Tsarism—this is only a mild picture of the British Empire over which its defenders and upholders boast that the sun never sets.

\* \* \*

**I**t is from this yoke of slavery that hundreds of millions of black, white, yellow, brown, toiling humanity are struggling for national freedom and social emancipation. This struggle can only be successfully carried through by cementing the closest bonds of international solidarity between the toiling masses, whether Indians, Negroes or Whites in the colonies and the metropolis against the common enemy—**British Imperialism**. For us, the issue is clear. The Negro masses in Africa and the West Indies can never free themselves from their tyrants single handed. Victory can only be achieved when the workers of India, the workers of Ireland, of Britain and other parts of the Empire realize that theirs is a common struggle with ours. That the same rulers who oppress them, also oppress us. And that as long as the British imperialists are able to keep our struggles divided from each other, so long will they be able to maintain their domination over all of us. Therefore, let us join hands in **the common struggle against The Common Enemy**.

## An Open Letter To The I.L.D. (U.S.A.)

Dear Comrades:

The Executive of the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers has just received news that the Treasury Department of the United States Government has lifted the ban on our official organ, the "**Negro Worker**", thanks to your vigorous protest action.

We want to take this opportunity of extending our warmest appreciation to you; and through you to all the revolutionary white and black workers for their splendid expression of international solidarity with the struggles of the Negro masses in Africa and other colonies. We consider this a great victory for the working class right of free press. The action of the American Imperialists towards the revolutionary upsurge of the Negro masses and the growing solidarity between the black and the white workers is not to be wondered at. Like the British, French, and other imperialist powers with colonial possessions in Africa, the Yankee imperialists are carrying on the most ferocious attacks upon the living conditions of Negro masses, and in order to do this most effectively they attempt to prevent the working class from reading revolutionary literature such as the "**Negro Worker**". But we want to assure our readers in America, that no matter what difficulties the imperialists put in our way, the "**Negro Worker**" will continue to carry on the struggle in mobilizing the millions of black proletarians in the colonies against hunger, unemployment, taxation, lynch law, forced labour, imperialist war, and for the defence of the Chinese masses and the Soviet Union, the fatherland of the international working class,—white as well as coloured.

We again congratulate the International Labour Defence on this splendid victory. We once more assure you of our closest collaboration and wish you every success in your present campaigns, especially for the immediate freedom of the Scottsboro victims and that labour veteran, Tom Mooney.

Fraternally yours,

**International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers.**

George Padmore, Secretary.

Hamburg, Germany, July 14, 1932.



# Under The Yoke of Imperialism

## Atrocities in the Congo

By Lukuta te.

We are pleased to publish the following first hand account of the recent Congo revolt sent us by **Comrade Lukuta te**, a native worker from Elizabethville. This confirms the correctness of the previous articles published in the "**Negro Worker**" and repudiates the slanderous statements published in the Social-democratic and Negro petty-bourgeois press in America, to the effect, that the Belgian authorities were suppressing witch doctors. — Ed.



A Congo Village.

The revolt which occurred last year in the Kwango district of the Congo and which has been suppressed with methods of unheard brutality was not caused, as the official communiqués want to make us believe, by an excitement of the natives through witch doctors.

This revolt was the reaction of the workers and peasants against the most scandalous conditions of forced labour, taxation, and the worsening of the conditions due to the present economic crisis.

The tribes of the Kwango, especially the Bapembé-tribe, which is the most im-



portant one, have a very soft character. This tremendous territory, which is very fertile, is being exploited under a joint agreement of robbery by the imperialist companies, Lever Brothers; the *Companie du Kasai*, the *Intertropical Compina* and the firm of *Madail-alves Egregas*. Palm kernels and oil are the chief products of this district. It is necessary to see the centres of Kikurt-Bulunga, Levertville, in order to get a picture of the richness of products stored away in the compounds and warehouses of these capitalist companies.

The territorial administration is controlled by these same firms. These companies are the real rulers and absolute masters in the Kwango. What their officials say is law.

When the company which owns the sugar plantations of Moabeke wanted to



**Forced Labour on Palm oil plantation in the Congo.**

build a railway, they employed forced labour to such an extent, that the entire male population of this district was worked to death, added to which was the terrible effects of the sleeping disease. But even up to that time the natives did not protest.

But today, through the economic crisis, the prices of the agricultural products are falling. Immediately the companies are lowering the prices for which they buy, and no matter how hard the Negroes work, they cannot get enough to buy food. In agreement with the Belgian authorities the firms are recruiting the natives for forced labour. These who do not want to work are being imprisoned. So at last the workers are protesting. They see their conditions of existence getting worse and worse daily. So they are being repressed all the more. Hundreds are being thrown into prison. When this fails to break their spirit, the whip is being applied. Under the protection of armed soldiers the government



officials and the white agents of the companies go about the villages committing drunken orgies and raping the wives and daughters of the natives who are in jail.

So one day, the Negroes of the Kwango, driven to desperation, by these continuous outrages refuse to work. They declare a general strike. They leave the plantations and retire into the forest.

A territorial agent, an official of the Government, is being sent out to punish them. He is attacked and killed by the natives. The entire country rises in revolt. The garrisons of Hebo are being sent on the scene. Reinforcement is being asked for. The garrison of Leopoldville is also sent, with all its machine guns. Those soldiers who are natives of the Kwango, have been taken out of these military units before the others are sent. Speculating, as usual, on the old hatred of the tribes between each other, the white officials are exploiting this hatred and are sending soldiers to the Kwango district, who come from other parts of the Congo, and who for centuries carried on war with each other. (It is the old policy of "divide and rule". Ed.)

After the troops have been landed in Kikwit, the operations begin.

For the imperialists it was no easy fight. Although the natives were only armed with lances and other primitive weapons; while they had machine guns and pieces of field artillery. They even threatened to use air-planes in order to put down the uprising.

Then began one of the biggest slaughter, which has destroyed, once for all, the prestige of the whites, in the eyes of the natives. Whole tribes, which did not know the deadly effects of modern guns, were killed in a most cowardly manner. They died like rats as they attacked the soldiers almost empty handed. The natives fell by the thousands. The natives are now once more experiencing the terror of the times of the first occupation of Leopold. The prisoners that have been made,



**Women Doing Forced Labour in Kwango  
After the Uprising.**

have been shot, without trial, in front of the women and children as an exemplary measure that blacks must never make rebellion against their white masters.

At present the revolt of the Kwango has been suppressed. Down there thousands of corpses are bleaching in the sun. Many villages have been destroyed, but the revolutionary spirit of the Congo people will never be crushed.

The natives in the district who escaped the slaughter are once more being rounded up and despatched to the plantations to do forced labour.

But in the communiqués and in the Belgian capitalist newspapers one can read that "peace" is ruling everywhere, even in the burnt down villages and among those thousands that were killed. Such are the "blessings" of white imperialist rule in the lands of the blacks.



## Mr. Vandervelde "Discovers" The Congo

The atrocities of Belgian imperialism in the Congo which are well known from the time of Leopold have become so widespread of late that even Mr. Emile Vandervelde, social democratic leader of the II International, has been forced to speak on these outrages in the Belgian Parliament. Although this gesture of Mr. Vandervelde cannot deceive us, for there is no individual who is more personally responsible for the brutalities, outrages and butcheries committed in the Congo than this ex-minister-president of his Majesty's Belgian government, we are nevertheless publishing excerpts from his speech in order that our readers will not charge us with exaggerating the unbelievable things which go on in the Congo under the administration of a so called human and enlightened nation.

Those white imperialists and their black apologists who are today conducting

the vilest propaganda against Liberia in order to annex this little Negro republic, would do well to turn their attention to the Congo and other colonies in Africa under British, French, Portuguese, Spanish, and Italian imperialisms,—all of which are carrying on the same policy as the Belgian exploiters, oppressors and murderers. —Ed.

\* \* \*

In his speech in the Chamber, Mr. Vandervelde, armed with a portfolio full of government reports and other semi-official documents stated that:

"Three agents who had been instructed to recruit workers in a Negro village, found there only the women. The male population, who had evidently been informed about the coming of the whites, had fled. This seemed to be reason enough for the agents, to play themselves up as the masters in the Negro



Comrades! "See What I Have Found".



village. They asked the women to serve them, cattle had to be slaughtered, and finally they also raped some women. When the husbands asked a few days afterwards payment in compensation for this offense,—as it is the custom in the Congo—they were refused compensation. Then one of the Negroes lost control over himself in this dispute and threw himself upon a white and bit him in the breast. This Negro was beaten until he bled. Not satisfied with that, the agent handed in an indictment against this Negro. The government official **Ballot** who then began an investigation, as was his duty, was killed in the village and cut into pieces. Upon this, a military operation was started. In characterising the expedition, Vandervelde quotes from the telegrams which were exchanged at that time between the leader of this military forces and the Governor of the Congo. The officer asked for permission to stop the expedition, because the natives had fled into the jungle where they would be starving to death. In this way, many children among them would also be doomed, and that would not be in the intention of the administration. The governor however answered, that the action should continue. The leader was even to refuse to accept a submission of these people. The main task was, to recover the pieces of the corpse of Ballot and this aim should be carried out under all conditions. "We must", says the telegram, "carry out an act of authority and defend the prestige of the government before the population". So the leader of the expedition carried out his instruction. He discovered the head of Ballot. But this cost hundreds of natives' lives. They fell before the machine guns, or starved from hunger in the jungle or died under the strokes of the whips with which the soldiers forced men, women and children to give information about the hiding place of Ballot's corpse.

Vandervelde then continued with the statement, that the government had been warned for years of a revolt in the Kwango district.

In the Kwango, he said, a specially rigorous system of forced labour is ruling, for which not only the agents of the colonial companies, but also the government officials are responsible. Vandervelde quoted from a report which he has received as follow: "Of course the territorial officials do not openly order that a certain contingent of labour be supplied. But their wish is so openly expressed that it appears, in the eyes of the natives, like an order. Today the pressure of the authorities has somewhat ceased because the Negroes have got used to supplying the labour. They think that this is necessary, just as paying taxes. It is, as it were, an automatic recruiting." The methods used in this automatic way of recruiting can be seen from the report of a physician, which Vandervelde quoted to the effect that three of these unfortunate recruits,—Negroes, were brought to the place where they were supposed to work, in fetters, although they had the sleeping disease in the second stage.

The head tax has terrible effects in the Congo. Although the income of the Negroes has decreased all the time because of the fall in price of their products, the head tax is the same and is being collected to the full amount. Therefore, the Negro is forced to work much more than before the crisis. It is undisputed that he has now got to work four full months exclusively for paying the head-tax.

Vandervelde, said that in order that he might not exaggerate he had departed from his usual custom and, read parts of his speech from notes. In conclusion, he called upon the government to enter the forced labour convention of Geneva and to put an end to the system of forced labour in the Congo. He said that Belgium has got to defend her prestige in colonial administration before the world.

\* \* \*

In a future issue we shall reply to Mr. Vandervelde's suggestion about Geneva.—Ed.



# Against Illusions in the West Indian Masses

By Charles Alexander. (Trinidad.)

## Squalor! Poverty! Hunger!

Britain's colonial policy of plunder and suppression in the West Indies has brought about a general state of pauperization and misery for the masses of Negro toilers in these islands. Always living on the verge of starvation, the miserable conditions of these masses have become greatly worsened since the beginning of the world imperialist crisis. As pointed out already in a previous article, in the March 1932 issue of the "**Negro Worker**" unemployment which always exists even in times of so-called "prosperity", is a serious problem, and with no forms, whatsoever, of social or unemployment insurance, the exceedingly miserable conditions of these masses can be easily imagined. Squalor and poverty loom everywhere among the natives. Hundreds of children are falling victims to starvation. Many more hundreds are going around in rags, their faces gaunt from the pangs of hunger, while their tattered garments are actually falling to pieces from their poor emaciated bodies. The cup-boards of workers are empty. There is no work. Hunger stalks everywhere.

Despite such a horrible situation, the imperialist bandits who rule the islands, and who subject the masses to the most ruthless and frightful exploitation are increasing their plunder of the toilers with the greatest possible ferociousness. Taxation without representation is increasing. Those peasants who by dint of the greatest sacrifices have withstood the expropriation of their small patch of land through heavy taxes are having the hardest struggle, keeping the talons of the imperialist vultures from the means of their last crust of bread. Wages have fallen to the point where it is humanely impossible to maintain anything like a decent standard of living, despite the admitted low living standards of the vast majority of the population.

## Against Reformist Illusions.

Against such conditions as described above the question of a relentless struggle on the part of the native masses for the immediate necessities of life today, and for their ultimate liberation from imperialist, parasitic oppression places itself very forcefully on the first order of the day. The realization of this fact has already begun to seep into the minds of the West Indian masses, as evidenced by the various struggles which have recently occurred in some of the islands. True, these struggles have not embraced such wide masses in proportion to the total working population. However, these class battles must be estimated as an indication of the tempo of development of the revolutionary struggles of the West Indian toilers. But it is necessary to point out right here that in order for these struggles to be effective, in order that they may strike terror into the hearts of the imperialist bandits, they must be relentless, determined and uncompromising. At the same time the utmost vigilance must be displayed over certain so-called leaders who by their tactics aim to spread, and are already spreading dangerous illusions among the masses relative to the justness and humaneness of the imperialist Secretary for the Colonies in England. The struggles of the masses must be conscious and merciless. Maintaining illusions concerning the "goodness" of any agent of the imperialist plunderers is both dangerous and extremely harmful to the development of any successful fights. Such illusions not only put a brake to the tempo of development of the organized, conscious fight of the masses, but to harbour and



maintain them among the masses would be exactly playing into the hands of the oppressors, and he who advocates and executes such tactics must be branded as an enemy of the oppressed and exploited West Indian masses.

#### **The Garvey Movement.**

The Negro masses of the West Indies must not forget the bitter lesson of disillusionment they experienced at the hands of the arch-misleader, Garvey.



**West Indian Children. "Their tattered garments actually falling to pieces from their poor emaciated bodies."**

When immediately after the close of the last World War, Garvey announced to the world that he was going to the League of Nations conference to demand for the Negro "a place in the sun", his conditions have become acutely worse. Actual slavery still exists in Africa, lynching and peonage still go on in the United States of America, oppression and misery are widely prevalent in the West Indies.



In Trinidad, certain so-called big leaders of the people spreads these same illusions. They make trip after trip to England to interview, the Secretary of State for the colonies. And with what result? More oppression, more misery, more starvation for the native masses in Trinidad. And now from Grenada a delegation is planning another such trip to interview the colonial secretary in England. It is high time the West Indian masses begin to see through the manoeuvres of these people. Look at India! Look at Ireland! Let us learn from their experiences.

### **Crown Colony Dictatorship.**

As a necessary pre-requisite toward the dispelling of all illusions in their struggles, the Negro masses of the West Indies must first of all understand their



**A peasant market along the roadside in Trinidad.**

relation with the imperialists of Great Britain, and the relation of the governors and administrators sent to the islands by the Colonial Secretary in England.

British imperialism looks upon the masses in the West Indies as nothing more than mere slaves from whom they can extract super-profits. To plunder, oppress and suppress the masses of toilers is the only thought of these white bandits. The thought of "justice", "freedom" and human consideration never enters into their consciousness. Profits and more profits from your sweat and blood, and from that of your children is their only thought both night and day. And they have set up their Colonial Secretary's office in England for the purpose of seeing to it that this plunder and rape is carried out unhampered.

The governors and administrators sent to the islands are nothing more than agents of the imperialists under the supervision of the Colonial Secretary. All of whom are sworn to the same purpose, the exploitation and oppression of the Negro masses. The Colonial Secretary is appointed, paid and maintained by the



**Collection Number: AD1715**

**SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS (SAIRR), 1892-1974**

**PUBLISHER:**

*Collection Funder:- Atlantic Philanthropies Foundation*

*Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive*

*Location:- Johannesburg*

©2013

**LEGAL NOTICES:**

**Copyright Notice:** All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

**Disclaimer and Terms of Use:** Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of paper documents and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

This document forms part of the archive of the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), held at the Historical Papers Research Archive at The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.



British capitalists and absentee landlords, consequently, he will not give any decisions contrary to the wishes of the capitalists — his masters. Therefore, the trips of these "Negro leaders" to see the Colonial Secretary on questions affecting the conditions of the toiling masses are not only a waste of time, a squandering of your hard-earned pennies, but they serve to foster dangerous illusions in the minds of the people which will react toward our own bitter disadvantages. These people are not real leaders of the poor workers and peasants, but petty-bourgeois politicians who are utilizing the struggles of the masses as a means of making reputations for themselves and securing seats on useless legislative councils with the imperialist title of — "Honourable".

### What Must Be Done?

What then must be the mode of struggle which must be adopted? How can the masses attain better living and working conditions, and relief from unemployment and starvation? And under whose leadership must these struggles be in order to insure their success?

The only mode of struggle which will guarantee success to the masses is their own organized, revolutionary struggle. These struggles must not only embrace the workers in the towns, but also those on the plantations and on the farms. It is only by welding together the great masses of toilers in one solid fighting front will we succeed in our fights for better conditions and relief. A necessary step toward this direction must be the smashing of the imperialist infamous caste system and the unity of all workers and peasants. And these struggles must be under our own leadership — that is, under the leadership of workers and peasants elected from our own ranks. The history of the working class movement is full of examples of treachery by reformist middle class people who put themselves up as "leaders" of the masses, and who by spreading illusions were able to betray the struggles of the workers at the decisive moment for victory. It is only when the workers and poor farmers organize and unite and take the leadership of their battles into their own hands can they succeed. Remembering that "the emancipation of the working class is the task of the working class", and with the full meaning of this ever present in their minds, the West Indian masses must go forward in revolutionary struggle against the British imperialist bandits and their native Negro lackeys, against starvation, misery and high taxes, for shorter hours of work and more wages, for unemployment insurance and relief from hunger, and for an independent West Indian Federated Republic.



Natives gathering cotton in Uganda, East Africa, to supply Lancashire mills.



# Voices From The Colonies

## Slave Labour In African Mines

By a Worker Correspondent.

I have received a copy of your fighting journal, the "**Negro Worker**" and enjoyed reading it after which I pass it on to the other workers in the mines. In this way many of us get to read what is going on and begin to feel that the working class is bound to win out.

Now I want to tell you about the terrible conditions that are existing in the Mines at this present time. I work in the Nourse Mines and recently I lost my finger in an accident. Ever since then I have been trying to get some compensation, but have been told that I will get nothing. What are we to do? It is the same when any worker is killed or injured through accidents. Unless one is the son of a chief or is able to make a hell of a noise, nothing is given either to the dependents or to the miner himself.

Recently we have been told that we cannot be re-engaged for work in the mines, in the towns. Only workers who are actually recruited in the territories and reserves will be engaged for future work. This happens in spite of the fact that thousands of unemployed workers come every day to the compounds looking for work.

I think we shall have to follow the example of the Miners at City Deep who went on strike against the terrible food, or of the miners at Springs who marched out of the compound to the municipality to protest against the bad conditions in the mine, or of the miners of Wit. Deep who drove the mine manager out of the compound in protest against the worsening conditions in the mine and in the compound.

We want you to tell us what has to be done, for we look to the fighting paper of the workers to lead us to better conditions.

\* \* \*

The first step that has to be adopted by the miners in the various mines is to set up a committee of five or six workers in the compound and underground, and organize them in support of the demands for better food, shorter hours, payment for overtime, accident insurance etc., up to the point of making a stoppage of work to force the granting of these demands by the mine management.

At the same time you should draw up a detailed report stating what demands the workers are prepared to fight for and send this to the African Federation of Trade Unions, P. O. Box 5160, asking them to send an organizer into the Nourse Mines to discuss the whole situation with the miners.

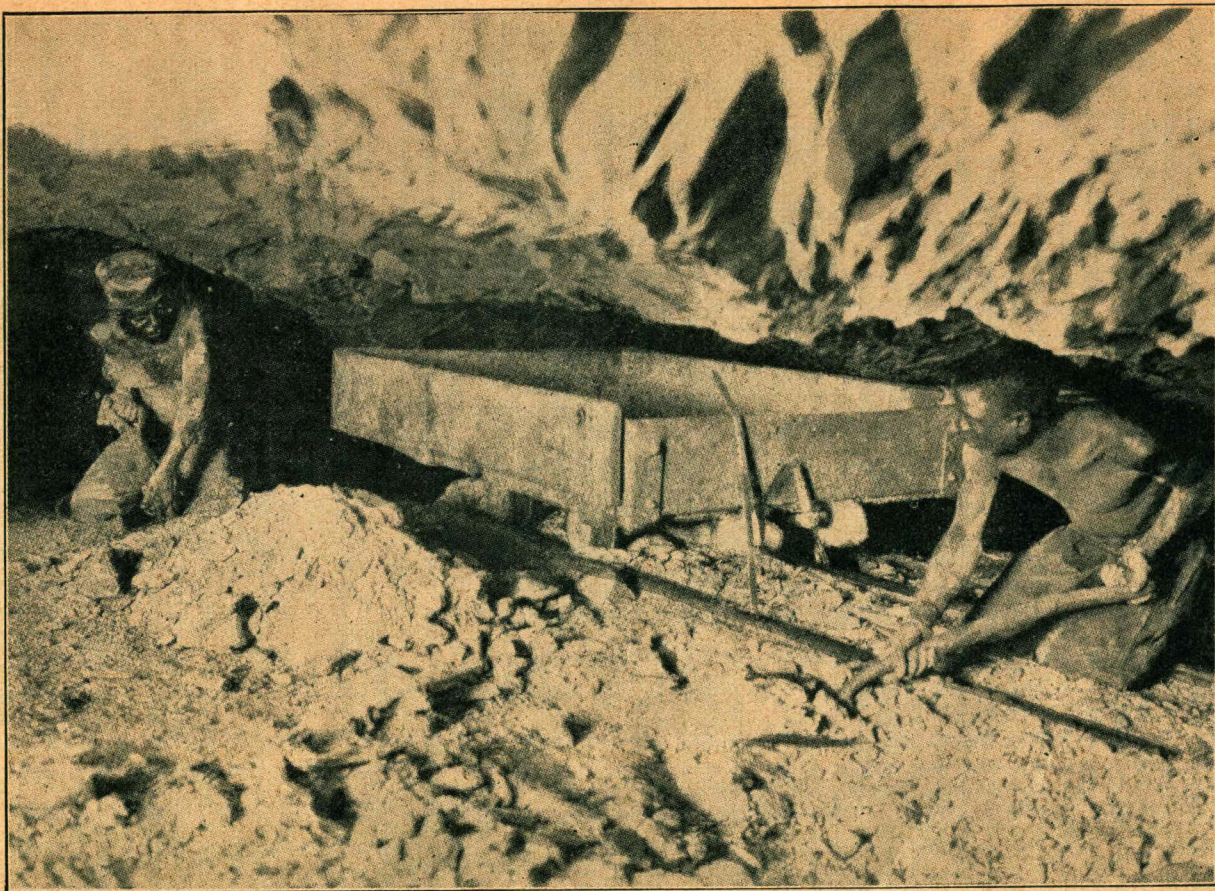
The International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers will immediately take the necessary steps to get into closer touch with the miners and help the A.F.T.U. to start a campaign for organizing the Nourse workers — Ed.

## Reactionary Methods in Nigeria

Your last received with thanks. I am glad you are able to see for yourself the terrible oppression under which the Nigerian masses have got to live.

The government now has adopted two policies of oppression e. g., to reduce





Natives in the gold mines of South Africa working for two shillings per day. This is how the capitalists make their super-profits.



the Masses to illiteracy and to collect taxes by force where there is no employment.

The Government has actually employed all the Churches to help them in exploiting the masses by replacing Education by illiteracy. The status of the Education Policy laid down last year, which was much complained of as being too low, has been reduced 50% this year instead of being raised a little higher. Laws have also been made prohibiting people who refused to send their children to school to teach them at home and quite recently, a cripple was fined £ 5 in court for teaching some helpless children who assist him in his domestic work and to whom he imparts little fragments of education as a reward for their kindness, seeing that their parents could not afford to send them to school. In all the Mission Schools, the fees have been made so high that most peasant children have got to stay out of School and the Government has offered the Missions Schoools good grant in aid if they do not teach anything above what the Government wishes. For this Grant-in-Aid, the Churches have all decided to keep within the limit of the Government's policy and the masses are thereby reduced to illiteracy.

As regards taxation. It has been decided to get rid of all non-Nigerian natives as the Government is of opinion that they are the people who would open the eyes of the Nigerians to unity and Mass movement. The policy adopted is to retrench all non-Nigerian natives from both Government and Commercial Employment and even from the Churches' roll of employment. When that is done, the Government would send a schedule to such unemployed non-Nigerian native to fill up and state his income per annum. If the individual fills it up with the statement "**not employed**", in an other few days hence, he receives a notice from the Government to quit the colony within a certain period. Should he fail to do so he is arrested and sent to jail for disobedience and after having served a term of about a month or two, he is released and then sent home under deportation as an undesirable criminal. So if any one who is a non-Nigerian native should decide to stay in any part of Nigeria, even though he may be unemployed, he has to say he is employed and pay such Income-Tax that may be levied on him by the Government to free himself from being black-listed as an undesirable criminal. As far as the Nigerians are concerned, whether they are employed or not, they are so terrorized that when the form is sent to them, they would enter certain income they are not receiving to save being sent to jail.

This is the position of things here. You my use the above information in the interest of our movement.—

Fraternally yours, with good wishes,

West African.

\* \* \*

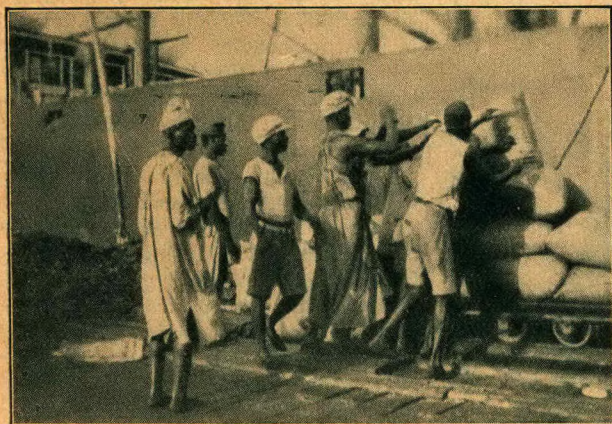
## Let Us Close Ranks

As a Negro and a worker, born in what is known as the Commonwealth of Nations, I can say emphatically that every endeavour is being made by British Imperialism to **keep us down** with the aid of police and bayonets as soon as the workers try to demand bread. This life of hunger and rags, forced upon the Negro worker, is backed up by the thumping, psalm singing, mealy mouthed missionaries.

Let us examine the conditions of the Negro toiling masses: For an African, a working day which may mean anything from 10 to 20 hours. Workers engaged in water transport, taking ships down the coast are paid the miserable sum of 1/9 in return for filling the role of stevedore, sailors, firemen, cooks, etc. for the profit mongers of the Elder Dempster Co. This gives the lie to the pet stories of Free



Labour told so sweetly by the mealy mouthed Missionaries; not to mention the 1,000 able bodied slaves, "freed" by the Government for constructing Railways at 10 d per day, and even less. No tales are told by these hypocrits of the 3,000 miners employed in the Government Coal Mines getting 1/- per day and even as low as 5d to 10 d per day for surface work. Let us examine the statement of Sir Percy Girouad (former Governor of Kenya) at the Native Labour Commissioners meeting 1912: comprised of British Judges, Missionaries etc.— "The only way to get the natives to make profit is to compel them to work."— Of course only the natives know what this means. Through the wholesale legalized plundering of backward peoples the Dole of the rich is paid enabling them and their pampered prostitutes to have the full share of the good things of life, living a life of ease and idleness, while we Negroes are unable to obtain the most primitive rights of man, namely—the food to keep us and our families alive.



**Dockers loading a ship in West Africa. They work 12 hours for 1 shilling.**

An outstanding example of Class Justice is seen in the fact that Negro workers in England are expected to put up with one of the worst forms of humiliation under the "Alien Registration Act" passed in 1920 by the scoundrel "JIX".

In spite of the fact that the Negro worker is the most intensively exploited worker throughout the "Empire" these workers will be called upon to stand ready for the defence of the self same people who live upon their backs and force them

into subjection—. Will the Negro workers allow themselves to be drawn into a blood bath in the interests of Rent, Profit, and Dividends by a class of well fed snobs, crooks and cowards? No. The Negro Workers refuse to take part in crushing down any workers of any country for the profits of these slave owners. We realize that the same gang rob our class economically, and betray our class politically and that the only way to real freedom is by fighting against this gang with the unity of the working class of the whole world for a free commonwealth of Socialist Republics. For the politics of the ruling class have always meant the legalized plundering of members of our class—the producing class.

Only by unity of purpose and solidarity can the workers go forward to smash the barriers and free themselves from a life of degradation and starvation. Not only by Indian Solidarity, nor by Chinese or African Solidarity, but by the worldwide solidarity of all Colonial workers and oppressed workers of all nations marching forward as a united whole against Capitalism and for the establishment of workers and peasants rule.

You may publish my letter in the magazine.

Fraternally yours,

**Jim Headley.**



# Lynch Justice in America

From a Correspondent.

In the midst of the intense world wide fight for the freedom of the Scottsboro victims, it is well to get a perspective view of the larger issues involved in the case. The Scottsboro frame-up is not an isolated instance of persecution; it is part and parcel of a huge, cold blooded system of oppression and terrorisation of millions of Negro toilers — a system that has well nigh been reduced to a science by the boss class that imposes it.

This boss terror against an oppressed

National minority finds its most open and violent expression in lynching, an institution which is rooted deeply in the damnable economic system which gives it birth and nourishes it. The present economic crisis, the growing capitalist offensive against the mounting struggle of the workers of all races reveals more clearly than even before the economic class basis of Negro lynching. It can no longer be denied that lynching and lynch frame-ups are invariably the direct result of developing class struggles. Lynch Law is the threat facing the Negro workers who attempt or dare to struggle against wage cuts and evictions or for unemployment insurance; the Negro share cropper or farm labourer who protests against the virtual peonage imposed upon him by the landlords and loan-sharks. These lynchings of recent occurrences, chosen at random, amply illustrate the class background of the infamous practice.



**LIBERTY! HERE SHE STANDS!**

The lynch frame-up of Willie Peterson, disabled and unemployed Negro war veteran, avowedly as part of the reign of terror intended to suppress the forward movement towards organization among the Negro and white workers and share croppers of Alabama.

The murder of the three Negro workers in Chicago and of two in Cleveland shot down by policemen in connection with the struggle against evictions.

Added to these instances are the wanton murders of individual Negro unemployed workers by sheriffs and police in every part of the country for non-payment of rent. Recently a large number of destitute workers suffering from

## A Bloody Record.

The murder of Ralph Grey at Camp Hill, Alabama, by a posse of sheriffs and landlords, for his activity in the organization of the Croppers Union.



cold and starvation were shot down by company detectives in various towns for picking up coal or fuel along railroad tracks.

Two tendencies are evident in this systematic persecution of Negro workers. First, we find that more and more the boss class is supplementing open lynching — i. e. with rope, faggot and gun etc. — with its newly-perfected device of "legal lynching"—i. e. lynching by "due process of (capitalist) law". Legal lynching is just as effective as stringing the victim up a tree, the capitalists think. It is safer, less "scandalous", being covered with the respectable cloak of capitalist "justice" and is invariably accompanied by the praises and thanks of such bootlicking, reformist organizations as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

### **The Scottsboro Frame-Up.**

The Scottsboro case, the most outstanding example of legal lynching contains all the typical elements of the damnable frame-up system — the trumped-up charges and lying testimony of State witnesses, the speedy mockery of a trial in a carefully whipped-up atmosphere of lynch mania, the hand-picked jury and prejudiced judge, denial of the most elemental rights to the Negro victims who are doomed to death in advance etc.

Other notable examples of the legal lynching system are the cases of Euel Lee (Orphan Jones) in Maryland, Willie Brown in Philadelphia, Willie Peterson in Birmingham, Jess Hollins in Oklahoma and Bonny Lee Ross in Texas. In refusing to grant a stay of execution to young Ross, who was railroaded to the electric chair, Governor Ross Sterling of Texas brazenly admitted the role of lynching as a weapon in the boss campaign of suppression of the Negro masses in stating that, "it may be that this man is innocent, but it is sometimes necessary to burn a house in order to save a village".

### **The Black Hundreds.**

Another dangerous trend in the present growth of boss-inspired lynch mania is the passing from the stage of individual lynchings to armed terroristic attacks against whole communities by organized bands of fascist lynchers — Ku Kluxers, Black Shirts, Legionnaires, etc. This tendency was apparent in the mass slaughter and disarming of Negroes in the Birmingham district at the time of the Willie Peterson frame-up and in the ruthless terrorisation of Negro comrades along the Eastern Shores of Maryland during the recent lynch fever, particularly in connection with the lynching of Matthew Williams in Salisbury, which was accompanied by a series of the most provocative acts against the Negro masses in that vicinity. In this instance the body of the dying Williams was dragged through the streets of the Negro neighbourhood, his fingers and toes were cut off and thrown on the porches of Negro houses and the lynchers shouted threats to the whole Negro population.

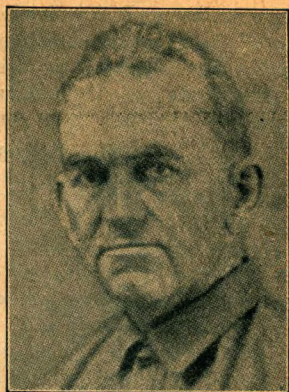
The contemptible Ku Klux practice of "night-riding" has been resumed in some parts of the south, as illustrated in the very recent incident at Greenfield, Tenn., where a band of cowardly fascists rode down on a Negro community during the night, hurling threats at the workers and burning several shacks.

### **Divide and Rule Policy.**

The ruling class has a two-fold purpose in fostering this vicious campaign of terror against the Negro toilers — 1. by whipping up lynch hysteria, it aims to divide the workers, and thus to weaken them; 2. it aims by this means to keep in terrorised subjection the Negro masses who constitute a great portion of the American working class.



Against this growing lynch terror, the workers of the whole world, Negro and white, must carry on a wide relentless struggle. It is absolutely essential for all workers to realize that the sharpening of the lynch terror is an integral factor in the general campaign of capitalist reaction against the toilers as a whole, aimed particularly to strike at the growing unity of Negro and white workers.



Mooney — Then and Now. As he was at the time he entered prison in 1916. As he is today.

## Letter From A Son To His Mother

Tom Mooney, the veteran Labour leader in America, who was framed up and thrown into prison 16 years ago because he attempted to organize the workers for better conditions recently sent the following letter to his 84 years old mother, Mrs. Mooney, who is touring the United States, pleading the cause of her son's innocence.

While on her way to a meeting in Chicago, mother Mooney who is risking her very life on behalf of her son, whose frame up like that of the Scottsboro boys is one of the greatest outrages of American class "justice", became suddenly blind.

The example of Tom Mooney's mother and her fighting spirit must fill with pride and serve as an added stimulus to all the working class mothers and working women in capitalist countries and the colonies in their participation in the big international campaign of the International Labour Defense to save the Scottsboro boys, for the freedom of Tom Mooney and Billings in America, of Walton, Diamond and Gomas in South Africa, and all other victims of the imperialist terror.—Ed.:

\* \* \*

California State Prison, San Quentin, Calif.,

"Mrs. Mary Mooney, c/o. Coliseum, Chicago, Ill.

March 15, 1932.

My Dear Mother:

"Words fail to express my thanks to you, dear mother, for the great sacrifices you are making on my behalf of the cause of Labor, which I symbolize. On top of the terrible strain of the sixteen years' struggle we have gone through together, you risked your life in crossing the continent to inspire the militant



workers, friends and sympathizers in their fight for my unconditional pardon. History records no greater devotion. You are a symbol of the millions of militant self-sacrificing and toiling mothers. You are like the beautiful old mother in Gorky's novel, "Mother", who, when her son had fallen in the struggle, seized the banner from his death-stiffened fingers, and unflinchingly carried it aloft in the procession of the heroic workers struggling bravely against the Czarist despotism in old Russia.



Mother Mooney at 84.

"It gives me the greatest pride and joy that your motherly affections are not limited to your own flesh and blood, but you are demanding the liberation and support for the embattled miners in Harlan, Ky., and the Scottsboro victims of race and class prejudice and all political prisoners.

"The word 'spot-light' has been thrown upon you. And how you have gladdened my heart by the grace, dignity and poise you displayed therein. You have advanced our cause immeasurably.

"My profound gratitude and deep appreciation goes out to the millions of militant workers, friends and sympathizers who have welcomed you so warmly, and rallied behind you to demand that the reactionary powers, who have kept me entombed for sixteen years because of my loyalty and devotion to Labor, relinquish their strangle-hold upon me and grant me an unconditional pardon. It is an inspiration to me to see how the toiling millions in this country, even

at the end of my sixteen years' imprisonment, are not relaxing their effort on my behalf. The masses are stirring and their insistent demands for my unconditional pardon grow louder and louder and cannot continue to go unheeded forever. Though your body is feeble and your voice has lost its resonance, yet the strength of your spirit and your deathless determination is sufficiently eloquent to inspire all of those who come to see you and to hear you.

"I confess, dear Mother, that I miss your regular visits to San Quentin. You know how you have always inspired me with your faith and devotion. However, the vision of your radiant face is impressed indelibly upon my memory. It is before me now and makes me more than ever determined to continue the struggle begun more than sixteen years ago.

"In expressing my thanks and appreciation to you for all your splendid sacrifices and struggles, I ask you to thank in my name all of those who are lightening your task by their militant support.

"As I have become the symbol of the oppressed and down-trodden workers, you have become the symbol of the courageous working class mothers who, unheralded and unsung, give their all to the cause of a better world for the toiling masses.

"With greatest admiration for you, I am,

Your Loving Son,

Tom Mooney — 31921."



# In the Land of Socialism

## A Challenge To The War Mongers

### The Soviets Demand Complete Disarmament.

Two following excerpt is from the speech of Maxim Litvinov, the leader of the Soviet delegation to the Disarmament Conference at Geneva. This speech is a challenge to the imperialist war mongers — Great Britain, America, France, Japan, Poland, Italy, etc. etc. who are arming themselves in feverish preparation to plunge the world into another bloody slaughter in which they intend to use the blacks as cannon-fodder as the did in 1914—1918. Every Negro worker should read this speech, for it shows that the Soviet Union is the only country in the world which is sincerely trying to maintain peace, and has demanded that all of the Nations completely disarm as a guarantee against war. Ed. —

### The Policy of the U. S. S. R. is a Policy of Peace.

The Soviet Government is not taking part in this conference on account of formal obligations, and not under any stimulus from outside. From the very first days of its existence it condemned war as an instrument of national policy, by deeds as well as by words, declared against all contributions and territorial annexations, and the oppression of any nation by any other, and proclaimed the principle of national self-determination. Ever since it has in its own policy pursued with strict consistency the line of peaceful and loyal co-operation with other States. Once war is excluded as an instrument of national policy, the Soviet Government sees no need for maintaining armies and other armed forces and, on its first appearance at an international conference — at Genoa ten years ago — it proposed total general disarmament as the only way of putting an end to war. It renewed this proposal as soon as it was invited to take part in the work of the Preparatory Commission for Disarmament. In making this proposal my government took into consideration the demands and claims of the peoples throughout the world as well as the spirit of its own people.

The Soviet Delegation urged at the Preparatory Commission the speediest possible realization of its proposal. At the same time we pointed out the imminent danger of new wars and that the only means of averting this danger, under the economic system existing in most countries, would be total disarmament, and that no treaties, pacts, protocols or international organizations could create real security for all countries. Our point of view was disputed in the Commission. Our warnings as to the imminent possibility of new wars were ridiculed. We were accused of pessimism and of exaggerating the danger. We were told that it was "security" that was required and that this security could be achieved by a system of treaties, protocols and other international undertakings, suggested by the League of Nations, and that there was no hurry about disarmament.

### Who stands for peace and who is against it?

It would, however, be wrong to infer from what I have said that the Soviet Delegation denies the importance and efficacy of all other ways of consolidating peace short of total disarmament. The Soviet Government has shown its readiness



for international co-operation by taking part in a series of international congresses and organizations and by the proposals which it brought before them.

Nor do we underrate the importance of international treaties and undertakings for peace. My government adhered to the 1928 Paris Treaty at the time and even put it into force with neighbouring States earlier than it was done by the Treaty's own initiators. My government itself makes a practice of concluding mutual non-



**Kalinin, President of the Soviet Union**

aggression pacts which it considers infinitely more significant than multi-lateral or general treaties. It has always proposed non-aggression pacts to all States. These pacts are a kind of acid test for making other States display their spirit, whether peaceful or the reverse. When a pact proposed by us to a State is immediately accepted and put into force, a certain stability in the relations between the two States may be affirmed. When such a proposal is not immediately accepted but considered for years, and even after the first letter of the signature has been appended to it, a period of meditation ensues, and the completion of the signature is postponed, there is naturally less feeling of confidence. But still more serious doubts of a peaceful spirit arise with regard to States which categorically reject proposals for the conclusion of a pact of non-aggression, either on some excuse or other, or without giving any excuse. It is then obviously impossible to deny the importance of international pacts as a means of discovering the peaceful or hostile attitude of another State. In addition it must be admitted that the conclusion of a non-aggression pact increases the guilt of the aggressor in cases of disturbance of the peace. Such pacts cannot,



however, he considered an actual guarantee against war. Total and general disarmament is the only effective guarantee against war and its devastating effects.

The Soviet Delegation submitted to the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference a draft convention for total disarmament, to be realized in the course of four years. This was four years ago, and it will hardly be denied that if our proposal had been accepted at the time, the events in the Far East would not have been no threats of a new world war, and the economic crisis, now being almost universally experienced, would undoubtedly have been less acute.

### Security Of The Soviet Union Menaced.

The country I represent is in a less favourable position as regards security than other countries. Only 14 years ago, it was the object of armed attack on all its frontiers, of blockade and of political and economic boycott. For 14 years it has been the object of indescribable slander and hostile campaigns. Even now many States, including one of the strongest naval powers, do not conceal their hostility to it, even to the extent of refusing to establish normal peaceful relations, and many States maintaining normal relations with it have refused to conclude or confirm pacts of non-aggression. The present events in the Far East, which have evoked universal alarm, cannot but cause special anxiety in the Soviet Union, owing to its geographical nearness to the theatre of these events, where huge armies are operating, and where anti-Soviet Russian émigrés are mobilizing their forces. Despite all this I am empowered to declare here the readiness of the Soviet Union to disarm to the same extent and at the same rate to which the other powers, first and foremost those actually at its borders, may agree.



Working girls in Russia marching at a Sports Meet.



## **To Organize Peace By Creating Security Against War.**

But before taking up the question of partial disarmament, the Soviet Delegation wishes to appeal to the conference as follows.

The political and economic differences existing between various States have become considerably intensified since the Great War and, owing to the crisis, are inevitably and rapidly leading to a new armed conflict between nations. This conflict, owing to modern improvements in the weapons of destruction, threatens humanity with incredible disasters, unprecedented devastation. The impending menace of war is causing universal alarm and arousing universal suspicion. This alarm and suspicion, together with the burden of taxation imposed upon the people for the maintenance by States of huge armed forces are nourishing and intensifying the present economic crisis, which is felt in all its weight first and foremost by the working classes. In these circumstances the task of the hour is not the repetition of any attempt to achieve the reduction of armaments or war budgets, the realization of which is bound to come up against tremendous obstacles, but the actual prevention of war, through the creation of effective security against war. This task can only be carried out by means of total and general disarmament.

The Soviet Delegation will move a resolution to this effect, convinced as it is that there would be no external obstacle to the carrying out of general disarmament if the governments here represented show their readiness for it.

### **The Tasks Of The U. S. S. R. Are Peaceful Tasks.**

The sole aim of the Soviet Government is the building up of socialism on the territory of the Soviet Union, and in the face of the successful accomplishment of the first Five-Year-Plan, of colossal achievements in every sphere of economic life, it seems to the Soviet Delegation that what has been obvious from the beginning must by now be as clear as daylight to all and sundry — namely that the Soviet Union requires, neither the increase of territory, nor interference in the affairs of other nations, to achieve its aim, and could therefore do without army, navy, military aviation and all other forms of armed forces. It does, however, require the assurance that there will be no attempts against Soviet territory either and that other States will not interfere in its internal affairs and that its peaceful economic construction will not be tampered with from without. It will only feel this assurance if other States also agree to give up their armed forces.

Now, when the whole world is going through an unprecedented economic crisis, which is shaking the edifice of the capitalist system to its foundations, the masses of the people suffering from unemployment to an extent hitherto unknown, from universal wage reductions, threatened by still further economic upheavals, the full burden of which the ruling classes readily shift on to their shoulders, must be relieved as far as possible from the threat of the catastrophe of war, which the course of the economic crisis is making more and more imminent. Security against war must be created. This security can never be achieved by roundabout ways, but only by the direct way of total general disarmament. This is no communist slogan.

### **This Triumph Of Socialism Is The Supreme Guarantee Of Peace.**

The Soviet Delegation knows that the triumph of socialist principles, removing the causes giving rise to armed conflicts, is the only absolute guarantee of peace. So long, however, as these principles prevail only in one sixth of the world, there



is only one means of organizing security against war, and that is total and general disarmament. One proof of its practicability is the fact that it is proposed by a State with a population of over 160 millions.

We hope that the responsible representatives of States here present will treat the idea expressed by the Soviet Delegation with the seriousness which the problem of assuring to all nations real security against war, real peace, deserves

## How The Workers Live In Cameroon

By J. Bilé

(Secretary, League For The Defence of the Cameroon Workers.)



Comrade J. Bilé

I am writing this article on behalf of the natives of Cameroon, so that the readers of the "Negro Worker" may know that imperialist exploitation is the same now, when the French and British imperialists are sucking out the life blood of the natives of Cameroon by unprecedented exploitation methods sanctioned by the League of Nations, as they were before when Cameroon was groaning under the iron heel of German imperialism; we condemn imperialist exploitation of any kind. In writing about the conditions in Cameroon we only cite an additional example of the cruel way in which the imperialist powers oppress not only the Negro workers, but also the native workers in India, China, in the West Indies and other colonies.

In Cameroon our lands were 'lawfully' occupied. "Scientists" have set up the theory that we were ignorant of any private property, and we are consequently refused even the right to our own land. The British Government has declared all areas coming under British administration to belong to the Crown; all the lands situated in French Cameroon were declared to belong to the State by the French Imperialists. The Negroes are, in the best of times, given only the use of their own lands which privilege may be immediately taken away from them, as was done in more than one case, whenever the European owners of the concessions wanted to use the land belonging to the natives for their own ends. A similar case that occurred under the regime of the present French administration proves that there is not any difference in the ways in which the imperialists treat the natives. The natives of Duala sent a delegate to Paris to file a protest with the French Government against the expropriation. We were sure that the delegate would fail in his mission if he stayed in Paris for even ten years.



As capitalist profiteering is the sole aim of the European imperialists the natives of Cameroon have been compelled to stop production and to work only in the interests of the European capitalists.

The result of the policy enforced by the French and British imperialists is that the natives of Cameroon are underfed; whenever the prices fall on cocoa and other commercial produce which they are compelled to plant they are brought to the brink of starvation.

The situation today is appalling. The majority of the peasants are ruined and thousands of workers are jobless. Since the unemployed do not get social insurance they are forced to starve. Added to this, the entire native population is forced to pay high taxes in order to enable the imperialists to maintain their oppressive governmental system.



Loading cocoa in the Cameroons at nine pence (18 cents) per day.

For the purpose of recruiting workers for the plantations, for work in the African forests or for the construction of railways and roads, the usual methods of colonial exploitation come into force: the head and hut tax are fixed at so high a level that the natives are compelled to look for work in the capitalist enterprises so as to be able to pay the taxes imposed on them. Wherever this method of recruitment proves to be ineffective, compulsory labour is introduced, thus converting the natives into slaves; as a last resource the capitalists resort to the importation of foreign labour on a contract basis which renders them much more helpless in the face of ruthless exploitation. The Krus that are imported from Liberia and are hired on a five-year contract are compelled to slave for their bosses in Duala: they have to work from 6 a. m. till 8 p. m., sometimes even longer, for wages amounting not to more than a handful of rice and a piece of salted fish. After five years of work they receive 30 shillings and a yard or two cheap print cloth.

Whenever a worker falls ill he is told that "if the monkey dies another monkey will take his place". The white capitalist looks upon his black workers as cattle that have to work until they drop.



**Collection Number: AD1715**

**SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS (SAIRR), 1892-1974**

**PUBLISHER:**

*Collection Funder:- Atlantic Philanthropies Foundation*

*Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive*

*Location:- Johannesburg*

©2013

**LEGAL NOTICES:**

**Copyright Notice:** All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

**Disclaimer and Terms of Use:** Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of paper documents and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

This document forms part of the archive of the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), held at the Historical Papers Research Archive at The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.



Besides these workers, the "coolies" must be particularly mentioned. This kind of work is not classed as compulsory work by the Labour Office in Geneva though it is one of the most terrible kinds of labour enforced by capitalism. The natives are compelled to carry extremely heavy loads from the stores to the ships, and even to transport them on their bare backs from the interior to the coast; even women and children are made to do this kind of work. Whole villages are deserted when a capitalist merchant closes a good bargain in the interior of Cameroon and wants to have the goods brought to the coast.

The workers are terrorised to an unheard of extent. Whenever they endeavour to organize they are simply hanged as rebels. Whenever they complain against their bosses or against the foremen they are mercilessly whipped. The officials of the concession companies are, according to law, considered to be civil servants and, as such are entitled to mete out punishment: even if they kill a native they are not called to account as they acted in the interests of humanity and in defence of European culture. Among the 1,800,000 inhabitants of Cameroon only about



**Children carrying water in Duala in order to help their over worked parents.**

7,000 children attend school. Neither the foreign contracted workers nor the natives are given any housing accommodations on the plantations in the European sense of the word where they might take a rest after their inhuman labour! The workers from Liberia are forbidden to bring their families with them; whenever exceptions were granted, the married are compelled to live in the same room with the single. It is no wonder that diseases like typhus, swellings, etc. take a heavy toll among the workers.

The missionaries, the preachers of Christian "love" and "peace", not only fully approve of this system but are, frequently partners in the business.

The time has come for us, in Cameroon, to do away with slavery and exploitation. Negro comrades of the world! White workers of Europe and America! Workers of the whole world! We call upon you to help the Negro workers in Cameroon in their struggle for emancipation; help us to win the rights and the independence that belongs to us and to all oppressed peoples in the colonies and to the working class throughout the world.



# REVOLUTIONARY POEMS

## An Open Letter to the South

By Langston Hughes.<sup>1</sup>

White workers of the South:

Miners,  
Farmers,  
Mechanics,  
Mill hands,  
Shop girls,  
Railway men,  
Servants,  
Tobacco workers,  
Share croppers,  
GREETINGS!

I am the black worker.

Listen:

That the land might be ours,  
And the mines and the factories and the office towers  
At Harlan, Richmond, Gastonia, Atlanta, New Orleans;  
That the plants and the roads and the tools of power  
Be ours:

Let us forget what Booker T.<sup>2</sup> said.

"Separate as the fingers."

He knew he lied.

Let us become instead, you and I,

One single hand

That can united rise

To smash the old dead dogmas of the past —

To kill the lies of color

That keep the rich enthroned

And drive us to the time-clock and the plow

Helpless, stupid, scattered, and alone — as now —

Race against race,

Because one is black,

Another white of face.

Let us new lessons learn.

All workers.

New life-ways make,

One union form:

Until the future burns out

Every past mistake

Let us get together, say:

"You are my brother, black or white.

You my sister — now — today!"

<sup>1</sup> Hughes is a young Negro revolutionary poet, the author of several volumes of poems, describing various phases of Negro working class life in America. He has recently written a play on the famous Alabama case, called the "Scottsboro Express".

<sup>2</sup> Booker T. Washington, a Negro reformist leader who preached the policy of submission and segregation to the Negro masses, especially in the South.



For me, no more the great migration to the North  
Instead: Migration into force and power —  
Tuskegee<sup>3</sup> with a red flag on the tower!  
On every lynching tree, a poster crying FREE  
Because, O poor white workers,  
You have linked your hands with me.

We did not know that we were brothers.  
Now we know!  
Out of that brotherhood  
Let power grow!  
We did not know  
That we were strong.  
Now we see  
In union lies our strength.  
Let union be  
The force that breaks the time-clock,  
Smashes misery,  
Takes land,  
Takes factories,  
Takes office towers,  
Takes tools and banks and mines,  
Railroad, ships, and dams,  
Until the forces of the world  
Are ours!

White worker,  
Here is my hand.

Today,  
We're Man to Man.

<sup>3</sup> Tuskegee, — a Negro college in Alabama, founded by Booker T. Washington, where the Negro youth is taught submission to white imperialist rule. The present principal is R. R. Morton, a disciple of Booker T. Washington and one of the greatest misleaders of the Negro masses in America.

## If We Must Die

By Claude McKay.\*

If we must die — let it not be like hogs,  
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,  
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,  
Making their mock at our accursed lot.  
If we must die — oh, let us nobly die,  
So that our precious blood may not be shed  
In vain; then even the monsters we defy  
Shall be constrained to honour us though dead.  
O kinsmen! We must meet the common foe;  
Though far outnumbered, let us still be brave,  
And for their thousand blows deal one death blow!  
What though before us lies the open grave?  
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,  
Pressed to the wall, dying—but fighting back!

\* A Jamaican poet, who has also written novels describing Negro working class life.



# What is the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers?

---

The Negro Workers Committee was formed in July 1930 at an international conference of Negro toilers held in Hamburg, Germany. The Committee is not a race, but a **class organization**, organizing and leading the fight in the interests of Negro workers in Africa, the West Indies and other colonies.

The aims of the Committee are as follows:

1. Abolition of Forced Labour, Peonage and Slavery.
2. Equal Pay for Equal Work — Irrespective of Race, Colour or Sex.
3. Eight Hour Day.
4. Government Relief for Unemployed, — free rent, no taxes.
5. Freedom to organize trade unions, unemployed councils and peasant committees, — right to strike.
6. Against racial barriers in trade unions and colour bar in industry.
7. Against capitalist terror — lynching, police and soldier terrorism, arrest and deportation of foreign workers.
8. Against confiscation of peasant and communal lands, against taxation of the Negro workers and peasants.
9. To promote and develop the spirit of international solidarity between the workers of all colours and nationalities.
10. To agitate and organize the Negro workers against the imperialist war in China and the intervention in Soviet Russia, in which the white capitalist exploiters intend to use black workers as cannon-fodder as they did in the last war.
11. To defend the independence of Liberia, Haiti and other Negro States and to fight for the full independence of the Negro toilers in Africa and the West Indies, and their right of self-determination in the Black Belt of U. S. A.
12. The Committee also fights against white chauvinism, (race prejudice) social-reformism and the reformist programmes of the Negro capitalist misleaders, and the missionaries, preachers and other agents of imperialism.

These misleaders, instead of organizing the Negro masses to fight for their freedom are the very ones who help the capitalists by preaching obedience, and loyalty to imperialist rule:

**Negro Workers, Organize The Fight Against Imperialism!**  
**Support The Revolutionary Trade Union Movement!**  
**Fight For The Freedom Of The Working Class!**





## **AFTER READING THE "NEGRO WORKER"**

**Don't be selfish! Pass it on to a fellow-worker!**

**Tell all your friends about us! Send us their names!  
We will send them a free copy.**

**By building the "NEGRO WORKER" you help in  
strengthening the fight for our Emancipation!**



**Collection Number: AD1715**

**SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS (SAIRR), 1892-1974**

**PUBLISHER:**

*Collection Funder:- Atlantic Philanthropies Foundation*

*Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive*

*Location:- Johannesburg*

©2013

**LEGAL NOTICES:**

**Copyright Notice:** All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

**Disclaimer and Terms of Use:** Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of paper documents and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

This document forms part of the archive of the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), held at the Historical Papers Research Archive at The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.